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ABSTRACT

This book traces the development of speech from a time when the spiritual roots of words were still experienced, down to the present day when words are in danger of being little else than 'bits' of information. The book illustrates the origins of everyday words and names and traces the use of words through history. It shows how certain sounds originally represented objects, ideas, and activities. The book's chapters are entitled: (1) Derivations: Pictures in Words; (2) Words and History; (3) The Nature of Sound in Language; (4) The Original Universal Language; (5) Developments in Lemuria and Atlantis; and (6) The Cosmic Word or the Music of the Spheres. (CR)

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The Origin and Development of Language

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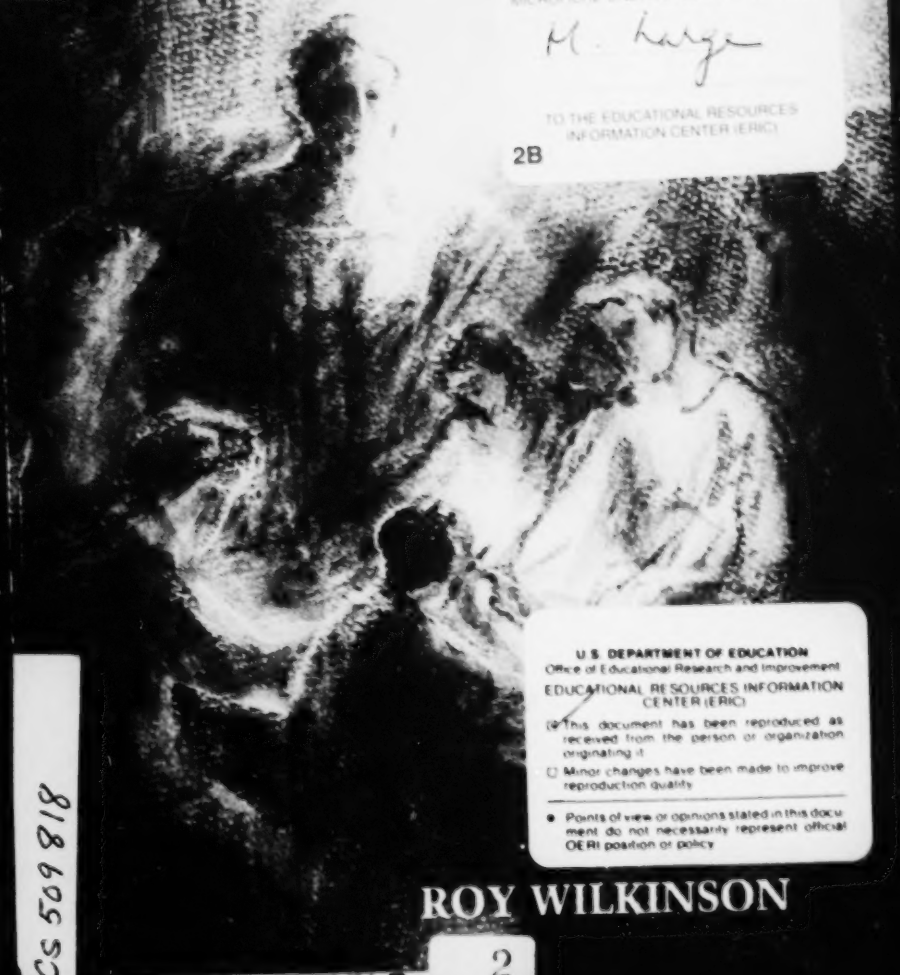

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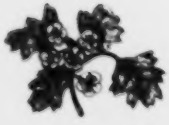
THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE

Roy Wilkinson



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Foreword

I am delighted that Roy Wilkinson has written this book, which comes at the end of his series of writings on Rudolf Steiner education. It is a return to his original enthusiasm for language and speech. He was one of the early students of speech formation and eurythmy at the Goetheanum, in Dornach, Switzerland. The author received his Diploma from Marie Steiner.

An experienced teacher in both state education and Steiner pedagogy, Roy Wilkinson has brought his energy and enthusiasm for these twin arts into Steiner Schools both as subjects and as a class teacher. Since his retirement he has continued his educational work by lecturing at Steiner Schools in many countries.

Over the last decade, our language has undergone a hardening. There is a trend to the shrinking of everyday vocabulary. It has become a criterion that children should only be taught in a vocabulary which they can understand, and so the riches of our language have been diluted. We now have a generation of teachers who have been educated

with this premise and however widely read they may be, their use of words has had the tendency to remain limited. Grandchildren of my generation are puzzled about the unfamiliar words their grandparents use.

Roy Wilkinson takes us into the country of words themselves, their environment, their growth and relationships, their imports and exports, and their history. Having explored these sources, he carefully leads us to the question of the creative forces which shape the words themselves, and in this way introduces us to the spiritual scientific researches of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) and his evolutionary picture of the world. He shows how this can open up wide perspectives on the development of the human being and speech. He indicates the implications of the opening words of the Gospel of St John in such a way that they can take on a meaningful reality for our modern consciousness.

. My hope is that this book will rejuvenate an interest in a lively use of language and words, and that it will also be an accessible way of introducing Steiner's outlook on global development and the human spirit to many new readers.

Audrey E. McAllen
Stroud 1991

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Introduction: Speech and Language

No better introduction to a work of this sort could be found than a quotation from Dean Trench's delightful series of lectures, *On The Study of Words*, published in 1861.

Speaking of language he says: "Oftentimes here we walk up and down in the midst of intellectual and moral marvels with a vacant eye and a careless mind, even as some traveller passes unmoved over fields of fame or through cities of ancient renown – unmoved, because utterly unconscious of the lofty deeds which have there been wrought, of the great hearts which spent themselves there."

Quoting Coleridge, he adds that language is often wiser than the wisest of those who speak it. It preserves the relics of ancient wisdom; it locks up truths, once well known but now forgotten. It employs metaphorical terms for the designation of spiritual things.

On words Trench says: "They effectually embody the facts of history, of the moral common sense, of the imagination or passion of men. Even if the moral

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sense be perverted, they will bear witness and keep a record of that perversion."

Thus language can be full of instruction, not merely a means of instruction. In it are incarnated feelings, thoughts, flashes of genius, mental treasures. Ideas may be fleeting but they are held fast in words.

Furthermore, there is poetry in language. Man does not live by bread alone. Speech is not merely an instrument for communication with fellow-men, but an art. Formed through the flowing movement of air, speech has rhythm, melody, plasticity, form. It becomes artistic when these things are raised to consciousness.

Beautiful speaking was originally cultic. It came to Greece from the Orient and became rhetoric in Rome. The conceptual element gained ascendence and with the development of material values, utilitarianism, the *sense* of what is spoken now takes precedence. The art of speaking is no longer cultivated generally and, if we accept the criticisms made of our schools generally, neither is the art of writing.

Words have become symbols. Any other word could represent any other object. A rose by any other name might smell as sweet and any other combination of sounds could represent a rose as far as modern understanding goes, but a rose is called a rose for a definite reason. It is because sound and object, at least originally, had some connection with one another. The pronounced sounds of speech, as represented by the letters of the alphabet, have in

themselves a significance – a matter which we will explore later.

Speaking is something essentially human. It is a bridge between people. The animal may roar, howl or bark, but this is not speech. Only the human being forms sounds in order to express himself and to communciate with others. He is connected with language in a very intimate way. He may be called upon to fight for the *father*land but it is the *mother*tongue he speaks.

We think in words. Thoughts, feelings, will-impulses are conveyed through language to the rest of the world, and in learning to speak we accommodate ourselves to the world around us. In speaking we reveal our being, and our way of speaking is a reflection of our state of mind.

Words are combined sounds but the sound itself is not speech. The larynx makes movements and through the medium of the air, sound is produced. But speech is not merely a matter of mechanics. The speech organs are obviously a part of the human physical structure and must obey physical laws, but man is a fourfold being. Besides his physical body he has the power to grow, he has a soul life, and he has a fourth element which is the individual directive principle. This is called the ego, the "I". It is this highest member of the human constitution which sets the organs in motion. As children learn to speak before they realize themselves as individualities, so language existed before the human being became conscious of his ego. But in individual growth and in the evolution of mankind the point comes when the

ego can make conscious use of its instruments. The individual power of the ego is expressed in speech.

Like many other objects of wonder, we give little thought to language or to its origin and development, nor do we consider the deeper significance of language itself. Study of these matters means the discovery of a new world.

Language has a physical history, and etymology can show us how words have developed, but historical explanation does not lead to an understanding of the origin of language. As the human being progresses through physical evolution but has a spiritual origin, so also his language. The facts of evolution and the fact that the consciousness of man changes in the course of history are usually overlooked by those who would find the beginnings of language. The usual scientific explanations are insufficient. Only a science which goes beyond what is observable by the senses can yield the necessary information. For such knowledge we are indebted to the spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner who, from his own spiritual insight, gives knowledge of spiritual matters in a form suitable to modern minds.

Let us consider the attitude towards speech and language in some of the past civilizations. To the Hindus the sounds of speech were represented as seeds of Brahma, the creator of the universe. Brahma was the Word. The Greek philosophers considered words to be sounding pictures of things created by the gods. Vowels and consonants were compared with the union of soul and body. In Norse mythol-

ogy Allfather Odin is looked upon as the creator of speech. His son, Bragi, was the god of poetry. The name Bragi is possibly cognate with the words pray and Sprache (the German word for speech). B'racha in Hebrew, possibly related to the words pray and Sprache, means a blessing.

The Gospel of St John opens with the momentous words: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God". There is some mystery here which has to do with language. We read in Genesis that God *said*: "Let there be Light". We note further that the Lord God formed man of clay and gave life to it by breathing into it. The Divine breath created life. The human breath is used in speaking. This would seem to be another connection linking language with the Divine.

These are esoteric matters and later in this book we will attempt to deal with the Word and its significance. For the moment they are mentioned to call attention to the fact that speech and language may be more than what they have become in our daily life. From its lofty origin language has descended to being a mere means of communication and the tendency is towards a further deterioration of both the spoken and the written word. We use inartistic and contrived expressions such as Nato and Unesco. The popular press, and radio and television personalities, rejoice in crudities. The feeling for sound and word construction is lost.

If we are to accept the word of those who have deeper knowledge of these things, then the use of

language without any spiritual or artistic content has a more subtle effect than is apparent. It has to do with experiences in sleep.

The process of falling asleep involves the soul-spiritual part of the human being withdrawing from the body and entering another world. This is the spirit world which is inhabited by so-called higher beings who are, at the same time, creative forces. Their influence extends into the physical world, including human beings – who has not heard of the guardian angel? – but they are also dependent, in a sense, on the human race. Man's thoughts, and thoughts expressed in speech, re-echo in the soul during sleep when they are evaluated by higher beings and taken up by them if acceptable. But language in purely materialistic terms, i.e. without spiritual content, falls, so to speak, on deaf ears. There is no bond created and hence both man's body and soul are deprived of beneficial influence.

Minor instances of a deeper significance and of the connection of language with man's evolution may be gleaned from the following.

In India the reciting of Mantras (sacred texts or psalms) is not only a question of content but that the element of sound has an effect as did the Latin chanting in the acoustically perfect, mediaeval Gothic cathedrals of Europe. To the old Israelites the reciting in Hebrew of the opening words of Genesis caused pictures to arise in their souls. Another world lay behind the words "Bereshit bara Elohim eth ha shamayim v'eth ha aretz" – "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". (Elohim

are high ranking spiritual beings, translated into English as God.) In the Persian, Egypto-Chaldean, and into the Greek period words had a different significance. Communication from person to person was on a different level. In Egypt the priests cultivated the spoken word and were able to exercise healing and a certain magic thereby. The Australian Aboriginals believe that it is possible to kill a person at far distances with a shout, while an ancient British legend says that the Stonehenge monument was built by the wizard Merlin who "sang the stones" from their Welsh quarry to Salisbury Plain. The Anglo-Saxons went into battle chanting alliterations with the designed purpose of inspiring terror in the souls of their opponents, while the Maoris of New Zealand preceded battles with their *haka*. Even now the recitation of an alliteration has some sort of hypnotic effect. An incantation works, supposedly, by the power of its language.

Although different words and modes of expression are used in different languages, speech is a unifying element and the relationships of words in different languages, which can be traced over the whole world, point to one original language.

To some extent circumstances determine the way a people speak, i.e. both the language and the way it is spoken. Folk character is reflected in the language. Conversely, once established, the language influences the people. It determines specific modes of thinking. Concepts are attached to words.

Not only in concepts but also in expression, language and the people who speak it are similar.

The German is solid and his language is plastic. English has a mobile quality and reflects the adventurous spirit. French is flowing; Italian is musical and gay; Spanish is obdurate, like the Meseta.

We can learn a great deal by studying the basis of grammar, considering and comparing, for instance, such things as gender, inflexions, pronouns and tenses in our European languages.

Modern German has three genders, French has two, English, one. We might ask why there is a gender at all. It is obviously due to some experience which is different in different peoples. Originally the German folk-soul experienced the sun as a feminine entity. It is therefore *die* Sonne (die = the, feminine). The sun is always referred to as "she". By contrast, the moon is masculine, *der* Mond, "he" (der = the, masculine). The light was felt to be neutral, hence *das* Licht, "it".

In French every object is either "he" or "she". There is no "it", everything is either male or female. The French people experience something feminine in the moon, *la* lune, and refer to it as "she". The sun is masculine, *le* soleil, "he".

In English most things are referred to as "it" except, of course, the obvious male and female objects such as man or woman, boy or girl and the equivalents in the animal world and a few oddments. Interestingly enough, the only time an Englishman refers to other objects as "she" is when he is speaking of his mechanical creations such as

ships, cars and aeroplanes – "She sails beautifully", "She runs like the wind", "Up she goes".

Another peculiarity in English is the use of the word "do". We do not say "How do you?" (except in the colloquial form of "Howdo") but "How do you *do*?" We say "I *do* like to be beside the seaside". "I *do* want to travel abroad." This use of the "do" signifies activity.

These things teach us something about folk psychology.

Declension of Nouns will raise many a memory for those who had to swot Latin in their schooldays – Nominative, Vocative, Accusative, Genitive, Dative, Ablative. These are the so-called cases. Mens*a* means a table or the table when it is the subject of a sentence. It becomes mens*am* as the object, mens*ae* in the genitive and dative, meaning "of a table" and "to or for a table" respectively, while mens*a* (long a), ablative, signifies "by, with or from a table". In place of these various inflexions we now use the prepositions – of, to, for, by, with, from. We ask ourselves the reason for the change. What is the function of a preposition? This particular part of speech shows the relationship between one thing and another and one must assume that its use shows that the mind of man became capable of greater differentiation than formerly.

In the same line of argument one notices the absence in Latin of the definite and the indefinite article. There was no "the" or "a".

In pre-Christian languages little use was made of the personal pronoun, "I", etc. The person was

indicated by a suffix to the verb. The greater use of the pronoun points to the development of awareness of self, of individuality.

A change of consciousness is also illustrated by the fact that we have tenses. Past, present, future were not such marked experiences in the early development of humanity, as is still the case with young children.

In the formation of tenses in the different languages one can see how different attitudes manifest themselves. In English the future is formed with the auxiliary "will" – "I will speak." There is a willing activity involved. In German it is "ich werde sprechen". "Werde" has to do with the idea of becoming. In French the future is formed by an addition to the infinitive of the verb, "je parler*ai*". The "ai" means "have" and literally translated, "je parlerai" means "I have to speak", i.e. there is an element of compulsion.

Of these things we are no longer conscious. Indeed, language has become very abstract although there is a reason for this. We use words without knowing their real meaning. As in ordinary speech we use metaphors and similes in order to make things clear, so many of our words are in themselves metaphors. As we read a word without noticing the actual letters, so do we use words to convey ideas without the knowledge of the content of the word. We forget the picture and retain the concept. We have lost all sense for the significance of the individual sounds. We have overlooked the significance of language itself. We have forgotten its divine origin.

It is hoped that these jottings will rekindle interest in this wonderful faculty, particularly among those whose responsibility it is to explain our heritage to the younger generation. It is an essential part of education to learn to speak clearly, correctly and artistically. It is a training for speaking the truth.

1. Derivations: Pictures in Words

The study of words can open up new vistas. It is as if scales drop from the eyes and another sense develops.

In times gone by, words had intrinsic meanings. We find them in the names of people, in place names, in the names of flowers, birds and fishes. We find too that the meaning of words can change from time to time.

All words undergo the same process. They express a reality but then become abstractions. Soul life is emancipated from words which then become mere gestures to indicate objects or ideas, and then they no longer designate or explain anything fully. In every single word it is possible to see a picture or perceive an imagination. As Coleridge says: "In order to get the full sense of a word, we should first present to our minds the visual image that forms its primary meaning".

To deal with the history of words, or their derivations, leads to a clarification of the sense and stimulates the thinking, but one must also be careful not to be led astray.

There is, for instance, the popular legend that Pontius Pilate was so perplexed after sentencing Christ that he drowned himself in a lake near the summit of a Swiss mountain. Hence the name of the mountain, Pilatus, near Lucerne. The story may be good for the tourist trade but in reality the mountain gets its name from the fact that clouds often gather round its summit and the shape of a hat is formed: thus Mons Pileatus, the "hatted" mountain (*Pileatus* in Latin means "wearing a hat").

Many of our words denote some material thing or process but are then used in an applied sense. For example, to "grasp" something is, in the first place, a physical activity, but it is also used in the sense of to understand. Even "understand" itself is an original physical act, as are comprehend (seize), perfect (done through in the sense of thoroughly), and leave (permission).

"Talent" really means a weight or a sum of money. It was extended in mediaeval times to the sense of mental and physical capability. *Umere* in Latin means "to be wet", from whence comes humours (the four bodily fluids of mediaeval physicians) and eventually humour. "Pain" can be used in the physical or psychological sense. One can "handle" either physical objects or ideas, "see" the point, physical or mental.

Language today has become merely utilitarian. We use words without knowing their real meanings. But the mind needs pictures and to this end we use metaphors, similes and pictures to make things clear. We have phrases such as "greased lightning",

"as thick as two planks", to "sleep like a log", "sweat blood", "as pleased as a dog with two tails". The Aboriginals of Australia have an expression for a cold night when they are kept warm by lying with the dogs – "a six-dog night". Sometimes the expressions we use are so remote that one wonders how they came to be used in the first place – "to talk the hind leg off a donkey" or "to help a lame dog over a style". To counteract the utilitarian aspect we have phrases that one could almost call poetic – "as dull as ditchwater" and "snug as a bug in a rug". We use expressions figuratively. Of some doubtful deed we say "it stinks". There exists a wonderful French expression – "Je parle français comme une vâche espagnole" ("I speak French like a Spanish cow"). This "vâche" should probably be "Basque" – "I speak French like a Spanish Basque" – but the picture was obviously not adequate.

As an example of proper names which once had real significance we could think of the village artisans – the miller, the baker, the smith, the wheelright. The profession and the name belonged together but now any person can have the name of Miller, Baker, Smith or Wheelright, whatever the profession.

Many of our words are themselves metaphors or contain pictures, but we no longer recognize them. As we read a word without noticing the individual letters, so we use words to convey ideas or designate objects without knowing the content of the word. We do not recognize the picture but retain only the concept. For instance, the Scottish word *bairn*,

meaning a child, is connected with the word "bear" in the sense of to "carry". The bairn is that which is carried or which is borne. A *carbuncle*, a red pimple in the skin, really means a little live coal. The rhythm —⏑⏑ (long, short, short) which we call the dactyl, gets its name from the Greek word *dactylos* meaning a finger, which has one long bone and two short ones. *Simple* is from the Latin, "sine plica", without a fold; hence also "duplicity", twofold.

This change from real experience to abstraction represents a stage in the development of human consciousness. But at one time the experience of something real came to expression in a word. The genius of language was at work.

Later the human intellect exercised itself. Scientists and scholars coined words to meet new discoveries and inventions. The Greek *tele* means far – hence telephone, telescope, television (far-sounding, far-beholding, far-seeing). Words ending in *...graphy* convey the meaning of description; those with *...ology* denote knowledge; those ending with *...sophy* relate to wisdom. *Micro* and *macro* at the beginning of words denote small and great respectively.

Our language is full of words of which few of us have any real conception of the meaning. What does *language* itself mean? It is a word derived from the Latin *lingua*, the tongue. And what is *derived*? It signifies "down the stream" (Latin *de rivus*). *Rivals*, connected with the same word, means "sharing the same stream". Normally the word "derivation" would strike us as something quite

abstract, something to be neither seen nor heard, nor obvious to the sense of touch or smell. But it is clear that the original was something quite concrete and the picture from which the word is borrowed is quite explicit, the flowing stream. The picture is no longer in the conscious mind. *Derivation* simply implies origin, source, descent.

Let us look at a few more interesting words in our language and consider the stream down which they have come.

There is a very charming word in the English language (also used in other European languages) which generally applies to our womenfolk. Usually it is taken as a gentle form of flattery; at least it is not offensive.

In the animal world there is a distinctive creature, one of whose characteristics is finickiness. When eating, it nibbles a little here, a little there, chooses a dainty morsel in one place and selects a tasty mouthful in another. Its movements are quite unpredictable. It will take a few steps forward, then a sudden bound, stop dead in its tracks, turn around and amble off in another direction. It never knows its own mind two minutes together. It has no sense of logic; indeed it appears to have no sense at all. It is impossible to train it. It has a cloven hoof, sometimes horns and often a distinctive effluvium. Should one succeed in establishing a friendship, it will reciprocate by nuzzling round your pockets. Withal it is a very gentle creature, endearing and

loveable – at least this can be said of the female of the species. It is the goat (*caper*, masculine; *capra*, feminine); hence the word *capricious* means "like a goat". Whether a man uses the one or the other to describe his nearest and dearest is a matter of taste.

In watching a goat one observes its unexpected and unaccountable leaps and bounds, particularly if it is a young one. When a similar action takes place in the human mind, we speak of "caprice".

"Caper", meaning "to dance or skip about", has the same origin.

Let us look at the character of another of our domestic animals, the dog. There he goes, trotting along, sniffing here, sniffing there, poking his nose into any old garbage that he can find. If a strange object comes within range of his super-developed sense of smell, he crouches and carefully extends his proboscis. "Is it good? Is it bad? Friendly? Better make sure; I can't afford to trust anyone. What's in this plate of food? Who is this stranger?" In short, the dog is suspicious, a word which means "looking under" and although the quality may not be applicable to every dog, cynicism is derived from the Latin word for dog, *canis*; from whence also comes canine.

There are now appliances which can do calculations in a few minutes, even a few seconds, which in earlier times might have taken years. What a long way we have journeyed from the original meaning of the word *calculate*.

Presumably in the past, the mind was not attuned

to grasping figures in the abstract. It needed something real with which to count, pretty much the same as our children and primitive peoples do today. We may have beans, or beads, or shells, or something of that nature to give to our children – but whatever they are, they are firm, solid, real objects. If we give a small child ten beans and ask him to find out how many twos there are in ten, we see with what laborious effort they have to be counted out. The Romans also had difficulty in reckoning, but they made use of everyday objects to help themselves, generally available everywhere. These were *calculi* – pebbles. Hence calculating = pebbling. (Try multiplying MCXVIII by XII!)

In arithmetic we speak of "digits". A *digit* is a finger (Latin).

The art of writing is really the art of the tombstone maker if we look at the actual word. To *write* in its first sense was to score or cut, so that writing means to take a stone slab, a chisel of some sort and a hefty stone for a hammer – a poor prospect for the postman. To do the thing genteelly would be to *scribe* since that means only to scratch or cut lightly.

The *Bible* has the expression "trials and tribulations". Tribulation has as its basis the Latin word *tribulum*, the threshing drum. Thus tribulation, a word introduced by Christian writers, is to go through the threshing drum. We have almost the same picture in the modern colloquial expression of "going through the mill".

"Earth" is that which can be ploughed. "Heaven" is that which has been "heaved" above.

We can have an assiduous typist but not an "assiduous" labourer, since this word means "sitting down to it".

As the majority of people are right handed, the "left" is simply the hand that is left (leave, left).

"Wrong" is connected with wring, as in wringing out the washing, twisting it – now of course superseded by the modern dryer. And *superseded* = sat upon.

A companion is one with whom we sit down to eat bread, (Latin *cum*, with; *panis*, bread) while a *candidate* is a person dressed in white from the fact that the Roman senators wore white togas (*candidus* = white). White is the symbol for purity. Would those who come round for our votes please note!

Who realizes that Lords and Ladies are the producers and distributors of bread? The old English word *hlaif*, meaning the form in which the bread came, has become our modern word *loaf*, bread. The one who administered the production of bread, the sowing of the corn, reaping the harvest and the baking was the *Hlaifward*. This word became "Lord", the feudal master. The old English word *digan* meant to make dough, to knead it, and the servant girl who kneaded it was known as the *daege*. The person who supervised the kneading of the dough and finally saw to the distribution was the *Hlaifdige*, a word which has become "Lady".

The range of words which illustrates the transition from the concrete to the abstract, or suffer a change in meaning, is endless.

Delirious, the state of being out of oneself or beside oneself, really means "swerving from the furrow".

Emolument, in the sense of a fee or wages, comes from a word connected with the Latin *molere*, to grind. It was the fee paid to the miller.

Weary is related to an Anglo-Saxon word which means a swampy place; hence weary is associated with walking over wet ground.

Who knows that "eavesdropper" refers to water dripping from the clipped edge of a thatched roof which has now acquired the meaning of one who listens secretly to the conversation of others; or that *window* is the "wind's eye" from the Norse *vindauge*, the space left for airing a room?

Whisky is the Gaelic *Usquebaugh*, meaning "water of life".

Dilapidated is connected with *lapis*, a stone. Dilapidated is a razed stone building.

In old Roman law a citizen's wealth was assessed by the number of cattle he possessed, very much like the modern Laplander with his reindeer. We still use the expression "head" of cattle. In Latin, head = *caput*. It is the source of the word "capital", possessions. Capital is also the head of a column in architecture. Chattels is also connected with cattle, as is the middle English word *catel* used in the sense of property.

Pecus is another word meaning cattle, herd or

flock; hence the word "pecuniary" relating to money or property. Pecus became the Gothic *faihu*, the Anglo-Saxon *feoh*, and the English *fee*. In German *Vieh* pronounced exactly like *fee* still refers to cattle.

The schoolboy, with his satchel and shining morning face, creeping unwillingly to school, will undoubtedly appreciate that the word from which school is derived is the Greek *skholé*, meaning leisure.

Kocs is a small village in Hungary where a light cart was made in the sixteenth century. This became known as a *Kocsi*. In German it became *Kutsche*; in French, *coche*; in English, *coach*.

Car is cognate with the Latin *carrus*, a four-wheeled vehicle, a waggon. Carriage has a different origin, from the French *carier*, to carry. Cart is a relative, so is chariot.

"Bride", the lady about to be married, is connected with breed and brood. "Bridgegroom" is the one who plants the seed. Groom is connected with the old English word *guma*. This is related to *Keim* in German which means sprout or seed-bud. They are descended from the Latin *homo* which refers to the physical man.

Those who like Italian food may be eating *Spaghetti*, which means "little cords". They may not enjoy the thinner variety, known as *Vermicelli*, if they realize that they are eating "little worms".

We all appreciate that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is engaged in a game of move and countermove. *Exchequer* means a "chessboard".

Parliament, the place for talking, comes from the French *parler*.

In ancient Rome the temple of Juno was called *Moneta*. It was used as a mint, a word still in current use.

A good etymological dictionary is a storehouse of wisdom. Here are a few more random selections.

Capable. From the Latin *capere*, to take or take in.

Compute. From the Latin *com putare*, to think together.

Corroborate. Root Latin word: *roborare*, to make strong.

Robust. From *robur*, strength, literally oak or any very hard wood; thus used figuratively.

Investigate. *Vestigium* means "track". Thus the English "vestige".

Insinuate. *Sinus* = a curve. "To wind one's way into".

Climax. Greek word *Klimax* means a ladder.

Encyclopaedia. Greek *Kuklos* means a circle. *En-kuklos* has the significance of encircling, or general. *Pais* is a child; *paideia*, education.

Epidemic. Greek *epi*, among; *demos*, the people.

Isosceles. Greek *sos skelos*, equal legs.

Contemplate. Connected with *Templum*, an isolated place, a temple.

Auspices. The Romans practised divination by the flight of birds. *Aves*, birds; *specere*, look, see.

Bitter. Something that bites us.

Common. From *com munus*, together service.

Neighbour. From *nigh* (near) *bur* (dwell). *Bur*

in old English meant a farmer, and is related to modern German, *Bauer*. In the rural community all neighbours were farmers. The Dutch South African *Boer* is the same word.

Prejudice. This is obvious – pre-judgement.

Coeur is French for the heart. "Rage" comes from the Latin *rabies*, which means madness. Hence our word "courage".

Os is the Latin for mouth, *ratio* for reason or business. An "oration" is therefore "mouth-business".

An interesting word from Arabic is *influenza* meaning "the goat's nose".

From the Persian we have *Paradise*, meaning originally an enclosed area, a garden (*Pairi* = around; *daeza* = a wall).

Also from Persian, "pyjamas" (*Pai*, leg; *jamah*, a garment).

In Ceylon *Kattu maran* = tied timber. *Catamaran*.

Finally, a very useful word which has somewhat changed its meaning. In Latin there is an expression – *Ne ego otium*. It means "I have no leisure" or "I am not idle". Put together the three words become "negotiator", one who is busy, has or does business.

Most of such words as are instanced here arose in the spirit of language, a formative force which is no longer with us. They developed instinctively, perhaps inspirationally. They were not the creation of individual personalities as are some of our modern composite words.

Some of our expressions nevertheless have a touch of genius as, for example, the Americanisms "Bootery", "Zoorookery", and Comfort Station (public convenience).

The writer once discovered two delightful words in the Swiss variety of German, *Schnurregigeli* and *Kellerettli*. *Schnurren* means to purr or hum. *Schnurrbart* is a moustache. *Geiger* is a violin; the "li" at the end makes it diminutive so that *Schnurregigeli* is a purring little violin or a violin played near the moustache, i.e. a mouth-organ. *Kellerettli* has as its base the French expression for "What time is it?" (Quelle heure est-il?). It means then a little clock.

In the South Seas a sort of English has become the lingua franca among the inhabitants. It is usually referred to as Pidgin English. It has some interesting expressions.

"Wan small bokkis b'long whiteman all'e scratch im beli e singout gudfela" = a violin.

"Lanich b'long bush" (launch belonging to bush country) = motor car.

"Lanich b'long fly" = aeroplane.

"Beli b'long me e singout 'long kaikai'" (food) = I am hungry.

"Man wiwi" = Frenchman.

Here is a well-known verse:

Papa b'long jumi tufela i sitap antap. Naem b'long ju i tambu. Peles b'long ju i kam mifela daon olosem antap harim tok b'long ju. Ju biringim kaikai tede b'long mifela. Ju larim mifela i olosem

mifela i larim ol, ol i mekim nogut mifela. Ju no biringim mifela kolostu along rot i nogut. Ju lusim ologeta samting nogut i raus long mifela.

The reader should not be deprived of the effort to understand this and the subsequent joy. The key is at the end of the chapter.

There are a number of objects the names of which are derived from the names of individuals who invented or popularized them. Thus "Cardigan", a knitted woollen waistcoat named after the Earl of Cardigan (1855). "Macintosh", or "Mac" for short, a raincoat, is named after the inventor of the rubberized cloth out of which these garments were made. "Wellingtons", from the Duke of Wellington, were originally leather boots which came up to and covered the knee at the front but which were open at the back to allow flexibility. "Blüchers", no longer generally known, were leather boots named after Wellington's Prussian ally at the battle of Waterloo. "Sandwich" takes its name from the Fourth Earl of Sandwich (1718–92) who could not interrupt his gambling to take a proper meal.

Other objects are known by association with their place of origin – "Jersey" from the island of that name; "Madeira" (wine) ditto; "Sherry" from the town of Jeres in southern Spain; "Port" from Oporto in Portugal.

The names of flowers often contain a pictorial or

imaginative element. Some are obvious like Sunflower, Buttercup, Love-in-the-mist, but who knows that Dandelion = *Dent du lion* (the tooth of the lion); Pansy = *Pensée*, the French word for thought or remembrance. Daisy is the Day's Eye. As Chaucer writes:

That well by reason it men callen may
The Daisie, or else the eye of day

Some flowers take their names from people, e.g. Dahlia from the Swedish botanist, Anders Dahl. Others are Begonia, Lobelia, Magnolia.

Names of birds and fishes are also descriptive. The Nightingale is the singer-by-night (old English *galen*, to sing). The Sparrow is the flutterer; the Raven is ravenous; the Owl howls; the Hawk is a seizer, connected with *havoc*; Osprey (*os*) is a bone-breaker. Thrush – *Throstle* is a name connected with the word throat. Blackbird is obvious.

A trout is a nibbler; salmon, a leaper; minnow, a minute fish; a pike has sharp pointed jaws, after the pike weapon.

If we study place names in the British Isles, we find not only descriptions but a slice of history. The names of towns, villages and localites often tell us about the peoples who first settled there.

Place names are named after individuals, tribes or

peoples, or they characterize the locality. Some are obvious. For instance, those containing the words bridge, mouth, church or kirk, ford, ward (a look-out), mill. Also obviously descriptive are names such as Coalville and Newhaven and those combined with a name representing some other feature, for example Cambridge, Plymouth, Whitchurch, Kirkstall, Oxford, Wardlow, Mill Hill. Some are not so obvious, but places like Haverford, Wheathampstead, appear to be connected with grain growing; Cowley, Cowden, Cowthorpe, with cattle; Kingston, Queensferry, with royalty.

England itself means the Land of the Angles, a west Germanic tribe which settled here. An earlier name, Albion, is from the Latin word for white describing the cliffs along the south east coast as seen from France. Essex, Wessex, Sussex and Middlesex are the abbreviated names of the East, West, South and Mid Saxons respectively. Kent is the home of the *Cantii*, the Roman designation for the people they encountered there.

It is thought that names such as London and Leeds are derived from Celtic chieftains, Londonis and Leodis, but these names themselves would refer to some characteristic of their owners. Edenbridge in Kent is Aedelmesbrugge, "Aedelme's Bridge".

There is a religious background to names like Holywell in North Wales and Wednesbury in the West Midlands which has an obvious connection with the god, Wotan or Woden (Odin in Norse mythology).

The Celts were at one time the inhabitants of

vast areas of Europe including the British Isles. The Romans pushed them out of England into Wales and Scotland but a few Celtic names remain. In Yorkshire is the Chevin, meaning a mountain ridge (Cefn in Welsh). The Wharfe, the river, is descriptive (of many bends). Aire, another river, signifies strong.

Of course Welsh names are still Celtic and can be translated – Llanduduno = St Tudno's shore; Caernarvon = the fort on the Arvon; Penrhyndeudraeth = the meeting place of the waters.

Anything that ends in caster, cester or chester is likely to be Roman. Manchester is an exception. *Castrum* means camp or fort. Thus Colchester is the camp on the River Colne. Worcester is the Roman fort of the tribe called Wigoran. Chester is *the* fort. It was a very important one.

An interesting evolution is to be seen in the name of York. The Roman settlement was called Eboracum. Eburos could be the name of an individual, possibly related in etymology to the word "yew" and that could be a description of the individual. Cum is possibly an abbreviated *castrum*. Hence Eboracum is a fort connected with a certain person of yew-like nature, or with yew trees directly. The thicker Anglo-Saxon tongue could not get round all these syllables so the word would become Eborac, Borac, Bork. (This is supposition but it is known that at one time the name was spelt Iorvik). The B becomes soft, as in modern Spain where one never knows whether to order Vino or Bino. Eventually one arrives at York.

After the Romans came the Anglo-Saxons and their place names are many. The following endings of names usually denote an Anglo-Saxon settlement – burg, bury, borough (a fort), tun or ton (an enclosure), den or dene (a pasture), stede or stead (a place), feld or field (field or land near a river), ham (a homestead), ing (family group), ley (a clearing in the forest), wych or wike (a farm), bourne (a brook). Here are some examples:

Edinburgh	Edin's fort
Longton	A long enclosure
Cowden	A cow pasture
East Grinstead	A green place
Sheffield	Field on the River Sheaf
Birmingham	Homestead of the family of Beormund
Otley	Otta's clearing in the forest
Aldwych	The old farm
Westbourne	The West brook

The Vikings have also left their mark and we find their settlements where the names end in thorpe, by, set or sett, ness, occurring for the most part in North East England. Examples are:

Osgathorpe	Oscar's village (Leicestershire, an exception)
Grimsby	Grim's town
Ossett	Osla's set or fold
Skegness	Skeggi's headland

The Normans have given us relatively few names:

Beaumont	Beautiful mountain
Belvoir	Fine view
Beachy Head	Beau chef – headland (*Chef* itself means head, derived from the Latin *Caput*)

In Wales we find the longest place name in the British Isles:

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwll - llantysiliogogogoch.

Translated this means something like "Mary's church in a hollow with a white hazel near to the rapid whirlpool, a saint's church near a red cave".

But this pales into significance compared with the New Zealand name of

Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipu kakapikimaungahoronukupokaiwhenuakitanatahu

This means "the place where Tamatea, the man with the big knee, who slid on, climbed and swallowed mountains, known as the land-eater, played on his flute to his loved one".

Other examples of how language has proceeded from the concrete to the abstract are found in the suffixes ly, y and dom. *Ly* is really "like" which is derived from a word meaning "having the same form or body". Thus Godly = Godlike; merrily = mirthlike. The original word has disappeared in English except for one particular applied use, namely "Lich" (or "Lych") as in Lichgate, the gate

with a little shelter at the entrance to a churchyard where the body, the corpse in this case, can rest while the assembly gathers to accompany it. German still has the word *Leiche* meaning corpse, and other European languages have a similar word.

The ending "y" is related to the modern German *ig* (from *eigen*) which becomes "own" in English in the sense of possession. Thus "fiery" means "fire-possessed"; "haply" or "happily" is "hap (good luck) possessed".

"Dom" at the end of a word is connected with "do". To "do" is to bring something about, to make a relationship, to make, to activate. Thus "freedom", making free; "kingdom", a relationship concerning the king.

Degeneration, Elevation and Sundry Changes in the Use of Words

In studying words, and their derivations and meanings, it must also be noted that words change their meanings from time to time.

Catholic, from the Greek meaning "according to the whole" now refers usually to the church of that name. But its original meaning is "universal".

Gothic, the wonderful style in which certain cathedrals are built, was once a term of scorn (Goths, barbarians).

The following words have taken on a somewhat negative aspect but had the original meaning as in the second column:

Lewd	belonging to the laity

Knave	boy or lad
Villain	peasant
Boor	farmer (Dutch, 'Boer')
Varlet	a serving man
Menial	one of the household
Officious	kind, helpful
Craft	knowledge, skill
Cunning	knowledge, skill
Prude	good, modest
Tart	a sweetmeat, hence sweetheart
Surly	sir-like
Silly	soul-ly, blessed
Denigrate	blacken
Idiot	a private person, one without office (idio-syncracy, idiom)
Miscreant	misbeliever (from the crusades)

The following are examples of other changes in meaning:

Integrity, from the Greek, referred originally to the health of all the members of the body. It assumes a moral nuance.

Obliged. From the Latin meaning "to bind to". Now also an expression for showing gratitude.

Furniture. To furnish used to mean "to equip".

Religion, religious. These words referred to external observance by monastic orders but have the new meaning of inner devotion.

Protestant. Now applied to the church as distinct

from the Church of Rome; protestant was first applied to dissenting German princes.

Natural. *Collins' English Dictionary* gives twenty-one meanings, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1990) even more.

Key. Thirty-one meanings.

Humour. Now the quality of being funny. Formerly one of the four bodily fluids.

Mystery. The Greek Mysteries refer to divine revelation accessible only to the initiated few. St Paul proclaims the new Mystery, i.e. the divine revelation through Christ. Mystery now is an inexplicable event.

Christians. The word has always meant the followers of Christ, but it was first used by the Romans to describe the disciples in Antioch and it was a nickname.

The words *love* and *gay* have taken on strange meanings in recent times. An *inducement* nowadays means a bribe, and *acquire* has often the significance of "steal".

In Elizabethan times, and still today, a *tart* is a sort of fruit pie but it has also taken on the meaning of a woman of loose character.

There will not be many of the modern generation who have stood in the corner of a classroom with a pointed hat on their head inscribed with the word "Dunce". It comes from the name of a scholar, Duns Scotus who adhered to the old theology at a time when there was strife between mediaeval points of view and modern. The modernists referred to him with scorn, and used his name as a term of

opprobrium.

Some words have been beheaded and some curtailed. Some are slang but slang tends to become accepted.

Loss of head:

Fence	defence
Sport	disport
Drawing-room	withdrawing room
Bus	omnibus (for all)
'Plane	aeroplane
'Flu	influenza
'Cello	violincello
'Phone	telephone

Loss of tail

Brandy	brandywine
Perm	permanent wave
Fan (supporter)	fanatic
Tram	tramcar
Gym	gymnasium
Mac	Macintosh
Wellies	wellingtons
Pub	public house
Yanks	yankees
Piano	pianoforte
Revs	revolutions
Fax (facs)	facsimile machine

One could pursue such studies as the above *ad infinitum*. If the author were stranded on a desert island, as in the British radio programme, 'Desert Island Discs', and given the choice of one book besides the Bible and the works of Shakespeare

(already 'provided' by the programme), a good etymological dictionary would suffice.

Key to the South Sea English (p. 23)

Papa: Father
b'long jumi tufela: belonging to you, me and all fellow = our
i sitap antap: he stays on top = in heaven
Naem: Name
b'long ju: belonging to you = thy
i tambu: he, holy
Peles: place (kingdom)
i kam: he come
mifela: us
daon: down
olosem: all the same
harim tok: hear him talk = will (thy will)
Ju biringim kaikai tede b'long mifela: you bring food daily belonging to us
larim mifela iolosem: forgive us who all the same
ol i mekim nogut mifela: all who make no good us (who trespass against us)
Ju no biringim mifela kolostu along rot i nogut: you not bring us close along road he no good
lusim: loosen
ologeta: altogether
raus: out of

The Lord's prayer in Pidgin English!

2. Words and History

In addition to the inherent information which words contain, they also provide indications of historical developments and of the changing mind of man. Greek thought and the Greek language supply us with a whole range of words embodying specific concepts; Latin and Rome, another. Many such words surface or resurface with the development of scholastic life and theology in the Middle Ages. Another range of words comes from contact with foreign parts, with geographical discoveries, and yet others with the development of natural science, psychology, and technology. Words and their uses also show the difference in mentality of the different peoples.

From the Greek we have such words as *academy, school, history, geography, logic, grammar, rhythm, drama, comedy, tragedy* – and words ending in osophy and ology. The word *alphabet* itself is Greek although the letters are descended from the Phoenician. Many medical terms now in use are from the Greek.

By contrast, the Latin of the Roman world provides words of a distinctly different flavour, e.g. *authority,*

prejudice, property, testament, dominion, jurisprudence, command, dictator, empire, government, subordinate, officer, master, legal – words which have to do with the rights of the individual and material things.

Even without other evidence we could deduce that the Greeks were concerned with ideas, with art and philosophy, while the Romans were interested in politics and the law.

But a study of these words also shows us something else.

Pythagoras is credited with the invention of the words "philosophy" and "cosmos". *Philos sophia* means "a love of wisdom". *Cosmos* means "beautiful order" or "beautiful arrangement".

Similarly, Plato created a word which has come down to us through the Latin translation, *quality*. It means "of-what-sort", "whatness". It was a new concept, Aristotle does the same for what we have as *quantity*, "how-much-ness".

Historia in Greek times – our word history – had the significance of "knowledge gained through inquiry".

Philosophy, cosmos, quality, quantity, history – what does the creation of these words tell us? They are evidence of a change taking place in the relationship of man with the world. The mind is changing; it is becoming inquisitive and interested in the physical world.

This is one aspect but there are others. Let us consider the following three statements:

(1) At the beginning of Homer's great epic stand

the words: "Sing to me, Muse . . .".

(2) There are two words from the Greek of similar meaning but with different connotations. One is *enthusiasm*, which contains the word *theos*, meaning God. Thus "enthusiasm" means "being possessed by a god". The other word is *panic*. The Greek Pan was the god of the woods, fields and shepherds, a mischievous character represented as a man with goat's legs, horns and ears. To be in a "panic" means to be swayed by this creature.

(3) Socrates spoke of his *daimon*, a word which is the origin of "demon" – but "daimon" meant the inner voice, the voice of conscience. *Conscience* means "to know along with" but with what is not specified.

What can we deduce from the origin of such words as enthusiasm, panic, conscience and the fact that the Greek poet called upon the Muse for inspiration?

Such expressions point to a connection with beings in higher realms, the spiritual world.

Diogenes (about 400 B.C.) was once asked about his nationality. He ansered "a cosmopolite". It was a new thought and a new word.

This is further evidence of a change in outlook.

To appreciate the significance of the above we must take a step back in history to about the year 600 B.C. which marks the birth of philosophy. A change was taking place in the minds of men and the new impulse manifested in Greece. A new conceptual language was being developed which was transplanted into Latin and then spread over

the whole of the Roman world.

The ancient Greeks were seers who had what might be termed direct wisdom. They perceived spiritual beings and causes, but then, in place of spiritual vision, thinking developed. The new faculty meant searching for wisdom, hence one could speak of philosophy. Becoming more aware of the physical aspects of the heavens, they could speak of the cosmos. Earthly values are measured in terms of quality and quantity – hence the words, and of history in the sense mentioned.

The Greek poet did not feel himself as a personal creator but was guided by a spiritual entity, his genius. He was passive and receptive. He *had* a genius. Today we should say that a man *is* a genius. He is active and creative.

Similarly, the words *enthusiasm* and *panic* show that man was influenced by supernatural beings.

In the word "conscience" is the idea of knowledge with something unspecified. This something is the Unknown, the Divinity, God. In earlier times what we now experience as conscience had been felt as something outside man, the Eumenides or the Furies.

To be a cosmopolite is to feel oneself transcending tribe or race, no longer a member of a particular faction but an individual.

In evidence that man was earlier far more connected with the spiritual worlds we can cite a whole range of words.

If we look at the names of the days of the week, we find that they are connected with divinities,

in English with the Norse gods and clearly recognizable in Tuesday (Tiu or Tiw), Wednesday (Wotan, Woden, Odin), Thursday (Thor), Friday (Freia). In French we find equivalents from the Roman gods: Mardi (Mars), Mercredi (Mercury), Jeudi (Jove, Jupiter), Vendredi (Venus). The Sun day in English is the Lord's Day in French (Dimanche); Monday and Lundi (lune) belong to the moon and Saturday/ Samedi to Saturn. The planets are not to be thought of in their physical aspects but as homes of divinities, each in turn radiating its special influence.

In passing we might note that the early Quakers, in their zeal to combat idolatry, refused to use the common names given to the days of the week and substituted "First", "Second", etc., but failed to establish the practice generally. It is perhaps no great cause for astonishment since the words had long since been divorced from their origin and very few would know the connection in any case.

We have a number of expressions denoting human attitude or behaviour which are connected with planetary names, due to the belief that the planets, or rather the divinities of which the planets are a manifestation, are influential. We speak of a jovial mood (Jove, Jupiter), a mercurial character (Mercury), a saturnine person (Saturn). Mental deficiency is termed "lunacy" (luna, the moon).

The term "Zodiac" means the "Animal Circle". Most of the twelve constellations are represented by an animal figure whose characteristics are influential on human beings.

In this connection we can look at two very ordinary words which are not at all ordinary when their origin is investigated, *consider* and *disaster*.

We may well ask how such a word as "consider" has come to mean "think over". We are led both to ancient and, to some extent, to modern beliefs. The idea, incoporated here, as with the Zodiac, is that the stars – *sidera* in Latin – influence our destiny. The sages speak of a connection between the soul and the starry world – in sleep the soul leaves the body and communes with higher spiritual beings who dwell in the region of the stars. "Consider" then is "to consult with the stars" and has the same significance as the expression "sleeping on it". *Astra* is another Latin word for the stars and hence one speaks about the Astral body as a vehicle for soul forces. "Dis-aster" means "out of harmony with the stars".

The meaning of the word "atonement" becomes clear if it is split into its component parts: at-one-ment, the inference, as with conscience, being 'at-one-with-God'.

The divine connection is also evidenced in the words of greetings and farewells. Our "Good Morning" should probably be "God give you good morning". The Swiss have "Grüss Gott" (God greet you). "Goodbye" means "God be with you", and "Adieu" is a commendation to God's care.

The spiritual world also contains less salubrious characters, such as Pan, for instance. Other words point in the same direction.

"Nightmare" is a combination of "night" and an

old English word "maere" meaning an evil spirit. This was supposed to harass sleeping people.

"Fascinate" means the same as "bewitch".

The expression "religion", although by derivation it means "binding again" or "reconnecting", was understood in Latin to mean fear of the supernatural.

After the Reformation came a spate of words hyphenated with "self" – self-confidence, self-esteem, self-pity. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came the use of the word "Ego", meaning "I", self, the individuality – ego-centric, egoism. Another change is that whereas formerly God was the all-wise creator, now the word "nature" is used.

The use of such words demonstrates how consciousness of the individual is growing and that the divine is superseded.

The appearance of certain words in a particular language at a particular time provides a clue to historical events. Thus such words as "preach" (*prædicare*), "condemn" (*damnare*), "feast" (*festus*), and "meditate" (*meditare*) appear in the language of the Germanic tribes at the time of the migrations. Other words which they adopted from the Latin are *altar, hymn, priest, temple*. This shows a contact with Christianity. The adoption of words for more mundane things – inch, mile, table, kitchen, street – shows the influence of another lifestyle.

A new impulse also changes the meaning of words which are already in existence. For instance, with the coming of Christianity such words as

trinity, catholic, sacrament were appropriated by the church. *Trinity* simply means a triad or a group of three (*Trinacria* was the Greek name for Sicily, the three-cornered land), *Catholic* today usually refers to the Roman Catholic Church. The *sacramentum* was the military oath of allegiance required from the Roman soldier.

The words "monk" and "nun" meaning "solitary" and (originally) "mother" (or a form of address for an elderly female), which we owe to the monastic system, are also from Latin.

The word *humus* in Latin means the soil or ground. In English it becomes the Christian virtue of humility.

Pagans originally meant village dwellers and *heathens* dwellers on the heath. Hence it can be assumed that Christianity first came into the towns.

Today we admire the wonderful structure of the Gothic cathedrals but we do not owe it the Goths. When mediaeval architects began to build in this style, the purists who doted on the classical Italian poured scorn on it by using a word which illustrated their opinion of the Goths, reputed to be crude and barbaric.

Another example of where a new word or the use of a new word can pinpoint an historical event is the expression "frank". The word "frank" is also connected with the migrations as is the name of the country "France". The Franks were a Germanic people and probably got their name from their favourite weapon, the javelin (the *franca*). The fact that "frank" has come to mean open and honest would seem to

illustrate that the Franks were morally superior to the degenerate Romans.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries new words make their appearance – words such as *absolute, concept, abstract,* and also *University*. Such words show a new line in thinking. They were adaptations from the Latin made by the schoolmen. *University* is first used in the fourteenth century as a place of study and comes from the Latin word *universitas* meaning a whole or a totality.

An old name for Britain or England is "Albion", possibly from the white line of cliffs on our south-eastern shore (*Albus* = white, Latin). In 800 A.D. Egbert, King of Wessex, united the seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and created "England", the land of the Angles. Since the Angles were a minority in numbers, it must be assumed that they were politically or intellectually superior to the other tribes.

Further examples of how new words come into a language in line with historical events are *negro, tomato,* and *tobacco,* which make their way into Europe at the time of the discoveries.

The English word *curfew* (*couvre feu*), meaning "cover the fire", was introduced by William the Conqueror who decreed that a bell be rung at 8 o'clock in the evening to signal that all fires should be doused and people should retire to bed. The object was to prevent dissatisfied Anglo-Saxon subjects conspiring against him. The edict was repealed by Henry I in 1100 but the word has remained in the significance of a prohibition to be out of doors after a stated hour.

We have a whole series of words such as *algebra, cipher, zero, almanac, equinox, horizon,* and *alcohol* which have come to us from the East. In the ninth century Baghdad was a centre of learning and that such words trickled into Europe from that time is evidence of contact. The crusaders added many more new words: *cotton, orange, sugar, damask, assassin, gazelle, sofa.*

From the sixteenth century a whole host of new words appeared: *pendulum, vibration, analyse, investigate, scrutinize, cohesion, equilibrium, pressure, static, gas, crucial, hydraulic, observe.* Even *discovery* was a new word in the sixteenth century.

Focus originally meant "hearth". Kepler used it with the modern meaning. The word *prehistoric* was not found before 1856.

Such words point to the growth of natural science and interest in the physical world. The new words were based on Latin and coining them began at about the time of the revival of learning, the Renaissance. In the artistic field Shakespeare was a prolific creator of new words.

Towards the latter end of the reign of Charles II, about 1692, the aristocrats referred to the proletariat as "*mobile vulgus*", the easily moved crowd – hence our word "mob".

Capital, finance, and *currency* are expressions coming into use in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the growth of the banking system. Even the word "bank", in the moneyed sense, belongs to this period.

With new inventions appear the new words:

anaesthetic, railroad, turbine, telegraphy, electricity, etc. Newton gives *gravitas* (heaviness) a new meaning – gravitation, gravitate. In due course come *chronometer, dynamo, magneto* and all words to do with nuclear fission. A revived interest in Eastern philosophies has given us *maya* and *karma*. In the nineteenth century words like *spiritualist, subconscious mind,* and *psychoanalysis,* show growing interest in occult matters.

Let us look a little closer at the origin of English. It belongs to the so-called Indo-European or Indo-Germanic tongues (the term is a little indeterminate) because of similarities in construction, grammar and words. People who spoke Sanskrit or pre-Sanskrit migrated westwards and split into various nations and races whose languages changed but still retained certain common features. Among these peoples are the Celts, Slavs, Persians, Hindus, Greeks and most of western Europeans. The language differs fundamentally from that of the Semitic and Turanian races.

As geology has strata, so has language, and the strata of English are Celtic, Latin, Saxon, Viking and French-speaking Norman.

In spite of the extensive Celtic settlement in England, very few of their words remain in current use. *Bard, bog, glen, druid* and the names of certain topographical features (see previous chapter) are some of them. We have adopted the word *Eisteddfod,* which is a periodical festival of song and poetry in Wales.

Some of the Latin/French and Anglo-Saxon connections have already been dealt with. We will look a little closer at these but first mention a few minor intrusions.

We have two words in common use which come from the Slav: *trumpet* and *slave*. We have one Egyptian word: *ammonia*. From North America, not counting modernisms, *potato* and *tomahawk*. From far-flung shores come *kangaroo, coolie, cannibal, cocoa, taboo*.

The Vikings gave us place names as mentioned in the previous chapter, but other words they have bequeathed to us are *call, get, hit, husband, knife, leg, skin, want*.

During the struggles with the Dutch a few words of that language were incorporated into English: *keel, buoy, cruise, boom*.

But in the main it is the Latin, brought to our shores as French by the Normans, and the Saxon, very closely allied to German, which form the basis of English.

Words and the use of words in these two languages show quite clearly the relationship between the two races at the beginning of their amalgamation.

Thus our modern words *sovereign, realm, royalty, homage, prince, duke, chancellor, treasurer, palace,* and *castle* all point to a ruling class, the Normans. The words of their subordinates are connected with the great features of nature – *earth, sun, moon, stars, water,* and *fire*. Saxon words also depict social relationships – *father, mother, daughter, son*. Also Saxon

are the more homely things such as *home, hearth,* and *house;* agricultural utensils – *plough, sickle,* and *spade;* the products of the earth – *wheat, rye,* and *oats;* and animals on the hoof – *cow, calf* and *sheep.*

English as such is only recognizable from the time of Chaucer (1340–1400). Before that, but after 1066, two distinct languages were spoken in England – French by the conquerors and Anglo-Saxon by the conquered. We see the distinction in the names for animals in the field and animals served as meat but fusion has taken place in the language in that we now use both terms – (modern equivalents are given) cow/beef, sheep/mutton, calf/veal, pig or swine/pork.

The fact that English has so many words is due to its mixed heritage and capacity to absorb. We often have two words meaning more-or-less the same thing, one of Anglo-Saxon origin and the other Latin/ French. In the course of time they acquire different nuances.

Anglo-Saxon	*French*	*Derivatives*	
think	penser	thoughtful	pensive
father	père	fatherly	paternal
day	jour	daily	journal
give	donner	gift	donation
drink	boire	drunkard	wine-bibber
feel	sentir	feeling	sentiment
hand	main	handbook	manual
king	roi	kingly	royal
free	liberté	freedom	liberty
heal	guérir	healing	cure
friend	ami	friendly	amiable
might	puissance	almighty	omnipotent
fear	timide	fearful	timid

year	an	yearly	annual
body	corps	bodily	corporal

For further reading in connection with this study, the author recommends *History in English Words* by Owen Barfield.

3. The Nature of Sound in Language

The foregoing dissertation on derivations only applies when words are already in existence, when there is already an idea incorporated within them. To understand language we now have to go one step further back and ask how a certain combination of sounds comes to represent a particular object or a particular idea. Modern intellectualism has resulted in a loss of feeling for what lies in the sounds of language. The mind jumps to the thought. The process by which something came to be expressed by a combination of sounds is repeated with already existing words in which the idea was already incorporated but divorced from the sound element.

Something of a between-phase exists in such expressions as "wind and weather" "stick and stone", "lives and weaves". These are not quite abstractions and the meaning is something between sound and idea.

We therefore have to ask ourselves such questions as why the sounds represented by the letters M-OO-N refer to the shining orb which periodically brightens

our night sky? Or what the letters S-U-N have to do with the radiant orb which sends us light and warmth in daytime? What is the connection between the sounds and the object represented? The answer is that the sounds of human speech came into existence as a result of human experience, together with the development of suitable physical organs.

Only certain sounds occur in our speech. They are represented by signs which we call the letters of the Alphabet. The letters of the Greek Alphabet had names: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, etc. In Latin this is no longer the case, nor is it in our modern languages. Having a name points to the sound having some significance. "Alpha" really means "the one who experiences his breath", i.e. man. "Beta" has an enveloping element, e.g. the house. Thus Alphabet means "the man in his house". The word Alphabet obviously consists of the first two Greek letters.

When words are shortened the full effect of the sound is not experienced. It is a further proof of the degeneration of language as mentioned in Chapter 1. It shows an impoverishment of the soul. It is a step from the sound pattern to abstraction. There is a loss of euphony.

The word *aere* in old German becomes *ari* in middle German and *ere* in early English, and refers to the person who performs an action. It becomes the modern *er* ending in both German and English – Garten/Gärtner, garden/gardener, etc.

As an example let us compare the beginning of Chaucer's Canterbury tales in the original with a

modernized version. In the former the final syllable of the words is pronounced.

> Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote
> The drogte of Marche hath perced to the rote. . .
>
> When the sweet showers of April follow March,
> Piercing its drought down to the roots that parch. . .

There is obviously an enhanced flavour in the original.

From Dr Steiner we learn that earth and man have developed through different stages of density brought about by the activity of spiritual agencies. Our physical earth is the result of a consolidation or condensation of earlier, more volatile, conditions. Parallel with these the human form existed in different states. Neither was man an ego-conscious being. The physical form was much more flexible and the human being of earlier times lived and vibrated with natural happenings. There was a tendency to follow whatever was happening by a gesture of the whole body. Thus, if the wind blew, the body would sway in harmony with it; the coming of the light would call forth a certain opening-out gesture; the idea of shelter would evoke an enclosing movement. In the course of evolution the physical matter of the body became denser and the gesture became restricted. Finally only a movement of the larynx was made. This was a vibration of the vocal chords as the air passed through them and this move-

ment produced sound. Thus, sounds uttered by the human being were originally movements and the movement was a result of experience. These matters will be elaborated in a later chapter.

We differentiate between two elements in our language, vowels and consonants. Vowels are the result of an inner experience and flow outwards. Consonants are an imitation of something in the outer world. Through movements of tongue, lips and palate they seek to conform plastically to the outward form of objects, as they are spiritually experienced, and attempt to reconstruct them. They are reproductions of the outward form or nature of things. Vowels give colour to language; consonants give form.

Let us think of a series of words beginning with B – boat, box, bottle, boot, ball, bell, boundary, bowl, baby, body. Is there a common factor in all these things which might be expressed by the B? The answer is yes. This sound contains some idea of enclosure, being enclosed, wanting to be enclosed, a limitation or some definite form.

By contrast, one could consider the L. Typical words with L are life, leaf, love, leap, light, lift. In a sense it is the opposite of B. Here in L we have an unfolding element.

Illustrative, too, are the sounds represented by the letters F and R. F is lively and energetic. Examples of words with F are fire, fight, fly, flow, flee. It is a sound which expresses much activity.

Action of another sort is represented by R – roll, rock, run, race, rattle, rat, rap, rollick, rub, rob,

revolution. Roll is a very characteristic word. R provides the movement and L the continuation. In England we have become a little lazy with the R. It must be rolled to be experienced in real movement, as in Scotland.

K has a hard, crystal quality – perhaps "kick" is a good representative word. M is a mixing or intermingling, a misty, moisty, murmuring sound. S has a sort of magic, while H appears to be only half a sound, a breath. N often expresses the negative – no, not, never – or provides a connecting link between other sounds.

One can get a feeling for the quality and significance of sound by practising SN and words beginning with those letters. In pronouncing S the teeth come together and a hissing sound emerges. To pronounce N the upper lip curls and with SN such words appear as snake, snare, snarl, snatch, sneak, sneeze, snivel, snore, snort, snuff, snub.

In the vowels the inner attitudes of the human being come to expression. The A (Ah) is obviously an opening out in wonder and amazement. At the other end of the scale is the U (OO), expressing a feeling of oppression or fear. O is a loving embrace. The Polynesians provide us with a good example of the significance of O – persons and things intimately connected with the individual have an O in the possessive adjective: tou mama, my mother: tou manao, my idea (each vowel is pronounced separately). Opu is the social group of blood relations.

When Adam named things he used the appropriate sound. That is to say, the name was a reality

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connected with the being or object which received it and it expressed in tone or sound the inner nature of that being or object. To know the name of an object was to know its nature. When the girl in the story of Rumpelstiltskin learns his name, it means that she recognizes his nature – an evil being which, when recognized, no longer has power over her.

It must, of course, be taken into consideration that language is a living thing and what is described here is only a remnant of an earlier, much greater experience of sound. With changing experiences the sounds (words) representing objects may change. Vowels are more frail than consonants and change more because of their connection with our inner being.

With these interpretations in mind, let us look at a few words and try to understand them from the 'sound' sense.

Let us take the word "Lap" the lapping of the waters. In the L is an unfolding; in the A wonderment, and in the P the gentle striking. The waters LAP. Lip has the same elements. "Moon" has something mysterious about it, something to be feared, negative. In "flower" is an activity and an unfolding. In "blossom" is something enclosed which opens out.

One could imagine that when the human being of earlier times experienced an enclosing, a sort of protective gesture was made. A feeling of wonder or amazement brought about an opening out gesture. Remnants of these things still exist. If something comes at us or we are attacked we instinctively

protect ourselves. If a person is suddenly surprised, the eyes open, the lower jaw drops, the arms and hands spread out.

A poet automatically makes use of the "sound" element. One could make an experiement. Let us take a series of consonants in this order:

BDMMNGLMMR NG CSTSNDDMGRWSTS
F TH SLG TH SH NG LNDSMMR NG WDS

We will look at the "sound" element. In the B is an enclosing, something hard in D; two Ms, a mysterious mingling; N, a negation; in G a pushing-away; L, an unfolding, more mystery; R, activity. After the NG sound a hard K(c)magic in S, something clear but hard in T, more magic, another negative, two hard objects, more mixing, pushing and activity. The W has become a vowel, OO opening into Ah, i.e. fear giving way to wonderment. Again magic in the Ss.

What is the overall impression? It is something extending into the darkness, clear, then a little murky, receding, appearing again and albeit, a distinct air of mystery. (It is suggested that the reader tries this out before turning to the end of the chapter where he will find the key.)

One will feel that the experience expressed through the "sound" element and the intellectual content are the same.

Eurythmy

In parenthesis one could mention here the new art of

movement, Eurythmy, as created by Rudolf Steiner. Here the significance of the sound is interpreted by a gesture. Thus A (Ah), wonder, is an opening and a reaching out of the arms. The movement is felt through the whole organism but it is more obvious in the hands and arms. B requires an enclosing gesture. As a poem is spoken, the artist makes appropriate gestures based on the sound element. Eurythmy thus becomes visible speech but it is an interpretation of the sound content and has nothing to do with the intellectual meaning or accepted interpretation of the word. One experiences a word *pictorially*.

Rudolf Steiner explains that primarily the individual sounds were connected with movements of the body. In the course of evolution this movement ceased but a representative movement remained in the speech organs. Eurythmy brings the body to movement again.

The gestures follow the patterns created by sound in the supersensible body of formative forces, known also as the etheric, which is, so to speak, the architect of the physical. (In Chapter 1 we referred to this "body" as the power to grow.) The larynx causes movements in the etheric around it and these movements, transferred to the body, are eurythmy. The movements which the etheric body of the larynx and neighbouring organs perform are translated into physical movements of the whole body.

If it is true that sounds express a basic experience, then we have here an international language more

vital than Esperanto or any similar creation. We can also explain the difference in languages – in that individuals or different groups experienced different aspects of things and so used different combinations of sounds.

For "tree" the German says "Baum", the Frenchman "arbre". The Englishman is describing something upright containing activity. The German describes the shape of the tree and its quality of penetrating the atmosphere. The Frenchman refers to a form which arises between active elements. Thus there can be no such thing as correct translation. True, if we look for the word "Baum" in a German-English dictionary, we shall find "tree", but the two words express different ideas of the one object. The connection between language and folk psychology was mentioned in Chapter 1.

From the point of view of the significance of "sound" let us look at another example:

L I F E is something which unfolds into an active adventure. The equivalent word in German is L E B E N. It has the unfolding, followed by an enclosing, introversion. In the French word V I E, there is a little wave. Thus we can read the nature of the folk souls – adventure, introspection, gaiety, respectively.

We might learn more by further study – life and love in English have almost the same sounds; the German equivalents Leben, Liebe are also similar; but there is no connection between vie and amour. In this case the writer hesitates to draw conclusions.

Today there are some 5,000 languages in the world and endless dialects, yet it is conceivable that at one time there was a universal language. We have to go back a few thousand years.

Key to "sound elements" (p. 56)

The consonants listed above to experience the "sound" element are from the opening lines of Fiona Macleod's *The Immortal Hour*.

By dim moon-glimmering coasts and dim grey wastes
Of thistle-gathered shingle, and sea-murmuring woods. . .

4. The Original Universal Language

In the *Bible* (Genesis, Chapter 11) we can read the story of the Tower of Babel.

> And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said to one another: "Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said: "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said: "Behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord

> scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city; therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of the earth.

According to Dr Steiner, this refers to a particular period in evolution when a certain solidification of the earth took place and parallel with that, a certain loss of flexibility in the human organism. The fact that a tower could be built is a sign that the earth's crust had hardened. The idea of building a physical structure to reach to heaven shows that spiritual vision was fading. The confusion of the tongues means that the possibility of entering into the "sound" element, which is the expression of the soul, was lost.

It was the intention of the creator gods that all men would have understood one another in spite of nationhood, the latter being due to natural, climatic and geographical differences. Different languages would have developed but a common understanding would have remained through the "sound" element.

However, there are negative forces at work in the world – spiritual beings who have not matured and these have an adverse influence on mankind. In this case, one result was to separate man's speech and thinking, separating the conceptual from the sounds of speech. That is, that the sound no longer expressed the content of experience. The other was

to develop a feeling of nationalism.

In the language of spiritual science these beings are known by the terms Luciferic and Ahrimanic and it is under their influence that different languages have arisen from the primal source.

The Sumerians were probably the last peoples to experience a real connection between experience and sound. The Sumerians lived in the Tigris-Euphrates area and were contemporary with ancient Persia, about 4,000–3,000 B.C. Meaning and sound were one. Although there were different languages, understanding was general. What was thought or felt was expressed by a sound or a combination of sounds and was intelligible to the one who heard, bearing in mind that the soul was also more open in those days. Eventually a language developed more adapted to intellectual thinking.

It was the Sumerians who also invented the first writing, the translation of living thoughts into pictorial symbols capable of being understood by the human mind. With the beginnings of writing, language begins to lose its flexibility.

There still remain in all languages certain similar sounds which are the remains of the universal language, but it must not be thought that our modern languages are anything like the primeval one. Since the scattering of peoples, much time has passed. Language is affected by the development of the human being and adjusts itself to climate and geography.

Different cosmic forces are at work in mountain and in plain. These same forces affect human beings

and hence not only their language but also their speech. Mountain dwellers will speak with the emphasis on consonants: in the plains the tendency is towards vowels. National temperament manifests in the different languages although individuals will vary from the folk temperament.

Languages have a common source; then they become individual; then they borrow words from one another.

Naus (a ship) in Sanskrit, is retained in Greek, becomes *navis* in Latin, *nau* in Celtic, *nor* in old Scandinavian, and is connected in English with nautical, navy, naval.

Aritra (Sanskrit for paddle) becomes *eretmon* in Greek, *remus* in Latin, *rame* in Celtic, *Ruder* in German, with the meaning of "oar" but transformed to the activity of "oaring" in English, i.e. "row".

Pad (Sanskrit) = *Podos* (Greek); *Pes* (Latin); *Fuss* (German); "Foot" and "Pedestrian" in English.

The word for "name" is to be found with slight variations in all of the following languages: German, Norwegian, Swedish, Anglo-Saxon, Gothic, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Finnish, Hungarian, Cantonese, Lap, Japanese, Sanscrit, Persian, Aztec, and probably many more.

Atlantis

In his immensely scholarly work *One Language*, Arnold Wadler traces all languages back to an original language spoken in Atlantis. It was essentially a

language spoken and understood through the sound element and was vastly different from languages today. Nothing known today can be taken as the primeval tongue. The story of the Tower of Babel represents the beginning of a deep process of the transmutation of all the elements of speech – vocabulary, structure, grammar, syntax, and meaning.

Wadler suggests that the expression in the story "from the East" could also mean "towards the East" and this would be in accordance with the migrations taking place at that time from Atlantis towards Asia. Shinar is probably an addition made by Ezra or Nehemiah when the Hebrews returned from Babylonian captivity. (Babel/ Babyl comes from a Hebrew word *Bal*, meaning to blend or confuse.)

Atlantis was the continent which once stretched between Europe/Africa and the Americas. Its existence is recorded in the traditions of many peoples – Greek, Egyptian, Babylonian, Hindu, Chinese, the native peoples who lived along the west coast of America – and, of course, we have the story of the Flood in our Bibles. The Biblical story of the Flood is the last act of the sinking of Atlantis which had taken place over a period of time. The last remnants of it disappeared about the year 10,000 B.C.

Plato learned about Atlantis from his grandfather, a close friend of the great Athenian statesman, Solon. Solon visited the Mystery Centre of Sais in Egypt and learnt about Atlantis and also the other great continent, Lemuria, which had previously existed in the area of the Indian Ocean. Aristotle

at first rejected the idea but was converted by studying an old Phoenician document. The Flood is referred to in the Babylonian story of "Gilgamesh and Eabani".

Columbus had a map showing territories called Antilia, which supposedly were located somewhere in the Atlantic ocean. He found them and landed on one of the islands, now known as the Antilles, West Indies.

Before Atlantis finally sank, migrations of its inhabitants took place in all directions. The most advanced, and those from which eventually new civilisations were inspired, moved eastwards towards central Asia. Others progressed right across Asia as far as the eastern coasts and even into North America. Other streams went westwards into North and South America. (We should note the cultural similarities on both sides of the Atlantic – pyramids, obelisks, mummification, sun-gods, painting, sculpture, architecture.)

Two streams landed in the west of what was to become Europe. One went via the present France, Germany, Scandinavia, Russia and via the Caucasus mountains towards the Gobi. These peoples were orientated towards the outer world of nature. The other stream went via present Spain, North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Iran to the Gobi. These peoples were more concerned with the inner man.

After centuries of development, further migrations and colonizations took place. In sequence the latter were made in India, Persia, Egypt/Chaldea and westwards. In these new developments was a

new impulse. It was towards the loosening of blood ties, towards thinking and moral consciousness, towards awareness of self or the Ego. Spiritual vision, picture consciousness was to disappear. The evidence for these movements is to be found in language, in the similarity of words the world over. There exist many common words, or common roots for words in everyday expressions such as sun, moon, names of divinities, temples, priests, tools, weapons, boats, clothing, food. Wadler instances a great number of North American Indian words which appear, sometimes in transmuted forms, in many other languages. It must be borne in mind that they could not possibly have been "borrowed" in the circumstances of thousands of years ago. Thus there are words in American Indian related to those in Sanskrit, Sumerian, Hebrew, Phoenician, Egyptian, Chinese and Japanese. They are found in Latin, Norse, Anglo-Saxon, and in their related branches.

In many words of different languages the common origin is obvious. We instance one example here, a word which has the sense of king, priest-king, or prince.

American Indian	Inca
Hebrew and Semitic languages	Hanak (to initiate)
Phoenician	Anak
Chinese	Huang
Arabic	Anak
Greek	Anakes

Zulu	Incosi
Maori	Inga
Anglo-Saxon	Cyning
English	King

Other European languages have a similar word.

The combination of M and N has many connotations and related ideas connected with man or the functioning of intelligence.

Manu was the leader of one of the main migratory streams from Atlantis, one which was developing reasoning power as against earlier clairvoyance. (Noah is the same personality.) Menes was the name of the first Pharaoh. Minos was the king of Crete for whom the labyrinth was built, a representation of the brain. *Manas* is Sanskrit for spirit; *manusha* means man. *Mens* is the Latin for reason or intellect, whence our words "mental" and "mind". Manito was the great spirit of the North America Indians. In Peru "to think" is *man*; in China *mien*. In Guanche, an ancient language of the Canary Islands, man is *mencey*. *Mensch* is the German for human being.

It is surprising to find a common word or variation of it in the most different languages. For instance, the word for a dwelling, village, community, temple, room, house. The common idea of a shelter of some sort is found as follows: "Kauhale" (village), Hawaiian; "Kahal" (community), Hebrew; "Cille" (house), Irish; "Calle" (house), Mexican; "Kalia" (hut), Greek; "Cella" (cell, a small room), Latin; "Egalla" (temple), Sumerian; "Ekallu" (temple), Assyrian; "Igloo" (house), Eskimo.

Listed here are a few North American Indian words and their equivalents in various other languages. Where there is a slight difference in meaning, this is indicated. Some of these words are of course found in other related languages.

American Indian	*Sanskrit*
Autuy (flower)	Audha
Sira (snake)	Sira
	Sumerian
Ur, Kur (mountain)	Ur, Kur
Take (shelter)	Sag (house)
Byra (son)	Bur
	Hebrew
Laila (night)	Laila
Tsi (ship)	Tsi
Ushet (woman)	Eshet
Topo (conflagration)	Tophet
Pokpuk (bottle)	Bakbuk
	Phoenician
Kara (town)	Kart
Are (light)	Ar
Shapash (sun-god)	Shapash
	Egyptian
Cab (earth)	Keb (earth-god)
Atona (sun-god)	Aton
Canaoe (canoe)	Khanu (barge)

Pac (flood)	Bakh
	Chinese
Teotl (god)	Ti
	Japanese
	Tai
	Greek
Humbra (rain)	Ombros
Balagua (ocean)	Pelagos
Uragan (rage)	Orge
Upel (sun-god)	Apollo
Teotl (god)	Theos
	Latin
Caribou (deer)	Cervus
Papal otl (butterfly)	Papilio
	Scandinavian
Marca (territory)	Mark
Wepee (wife)	Wif
Bo (dwelling)	Bo, By
Canaoe (canoe)	Kane
	Anglo-Saxon
Teotl (god)	Tiu
Mona (moon)	Mona
Huator (perfume)	Altar
	English
Seter (star)	Star

Gos (ghost)	Ghost
Menu (hair)	Mane
Crack (mountain)	Crag
Yala (ale)	Ale
Hol (hole, door)	Hole
Can (know)	Ken

Mankind is one family. The word itself shows this. *Kinned* means "related to". We still have the expressions "kith and kin" and "kindred". Mankind is therefore Man"kinned". Language proves the relationship.

These examples should be sufficient to show that the common unifying element in language is the word, i.e. sound.

5. Developments in Lemuria and Atlantis

So far we have considered the construction and development of language on the basis of already existing words and sounds but we still have to consider how words and sounds originated in the first place.

To find the beginnings of language we have to go back a stage further than Atlantis, to Lemuria, and to learn about this we are dependent on Rudolf Steiner's spiritual scientific researches.

Lemuria was a vast continent which stretched between the present Australia and Africa in the region of the present Indian Ocean. It was an area suitable for habitation by the human beings of that period, although both the physical constitution of the earth and that of man were very different from what they are today.

At that time a sort of fire-mist covered the earth. Its crust was malleable and liable to disturbances of a volcanic nature. The human being did not have his present physical form but a constitution attuned to those surroundings. His consciousness was also

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different. Outside disturbances affected his hearing. The activity of nature penetrated his soul and he was activated thereby. He "felt" the environment rather than perceived it. An image would arise in the soul, clear or dark according to whether what was in the environment seemed friendly or otherwise. He had not yet developed the capacity for memory.

Communication was by a sort of "thought" transference. The Lemurian understood instinctively the inner forces of nature; for example, he could assess the strength of the plant-like materials used for providing shelters; he could increase his strength through will power.

The body was of a different shape and also malleable. The heart, nerves and the breathing system were not formed as they are today. Only in the course of time did the human body as well as the earth become fixed. The change was naturally accompanied by a change in soul development. Rhythms from nature were imitated by the limbs in a sort of dance.

In early Lemuria the stance of the human body was not upright but became so in the course of time. Together with this upright stance certain organs were metamorphosed and became instruments for speech and eventually for thinking.

The ability to speak did not come all at once. The first stage was to make sounds in response to events in the environment. These expressed sensations of pleasure, joy, pain, etc., but they did not designate external objects.

There was a sort of cult connected with speech which was at the same time song. Specially inspired "wise" women would utter something like a recitative, combining sound, tone and rhythm but in which there was no sense as we understand it. This speech/song was absorbed by the soul of the listener. One could compare it to listening to music. Souls were influenced and uplifted. An echo of the speech/song element is to be heard in chanting.

Dr Steiner gives a description of happenings of this nature which took place towards the end of the Lemurian period:

> Picture a priestess intoning sounds and round about men and women are sitting as if in a dream, soaking up what they hear as inner life. In another place a priestess utters sounds and the people move about in a sort of rhythmic dance. The secret rhythms taken from nature are imitated in the limbs. People felt one with nature and the powers contained therein.

The sounds uttered by the priestesses were inspired by higher beings and these sounds and the movements accompanying them influenced the formation of the larynx and the speech organs, a process which was continued in the Atlantean period.

Here, in movement, lie the beginnings of speech. The next stage was that the human being became capable of producing interjection-like expressions. But only in the course of the next period, Atlantis, did language develop as a means of reciprocal information and understanding.

Because of earth movements and volcanic activity, Lemuria became an impossible place in which to live and migrations took place towards an area of the earth which was becoming more consolidated. This was Atlantis where a further phase in man's development takes place.

The Atlantean, like the Lemurian, lived with a very different consciousness from that of today and a very different constitution of soul. He was aware of the spiritual world, of spirit in the surrounding objects. Nature and the heavens spoke to everyone with the same voice.

In early Atlantean times man still had no articulate speech although he could reproduce the language of nature – the rippling of the water, the sighing of the wind – by corresponding sounds. He could express his inner feelings in sound.

Wonder is the precursor of knowledge. A (Ah) is the first letter of the Alphabet. Ah was the first sound man uttered. On becoming aware of an object the question to the Atlantean was whether it would be helpful or harmful, whether it would further or hinder health. Sounds were made accordingly. They were expressions of will and they were practically the only ones present in this primeval tongue. All words, if they could be called such, were really interjections.

The divine creative force, which could also be called the divine word and which was still experienced by humanity of the period, still worked on the soul and physical organization. Through inspired

movement of the limbs the body continued to be shaped, until, by mid-Atlantis, it had received its final specific shape. This included a speech centre in the brain and the final formation of the larynx and speech organs. What had been originally bodily movement became movement in the larynx and hence the ability to form sounds. It was the last act of creation. (It is interesting to note how even today gestures accompany speech.)

As children learn to speak before they are conscious of themselves as ego beings, so humanity learned to speak before it was endowed with the ego. Language was the last gift of the gods before the ego was incorporated.

Two sorts of sounds could be uttered: namely vowels as an expression of inner feelings, and consonants in connection with experience of the outer world. These are connected with planetary and zodiacal influence, and further explained in the following chapter.

As direct experience of the spiritual creative force faded, the faculty of memory was stimulated and in words memory could be held fast.

It is possible that there were dialects in Atlantis but mutual understanding was through the means of the sound element.

The Atlantean language could not form general concepts, only concrete specifications for single objects or events. In this it is like primitive languages today. Eskimo has sixteen different words for snow. Hawaiian has a whole series of words for wind. In North American Indian there are different

words for the activity of washing according to what is washed – hands, face, clothes, pots. Similarly for eating, whether the food be vegetables or meat, whether eating solo or in company.

The language of the Atlanteans was so close to nature that it had something of the power of nature. The force of speech was a sort of technology of the time. Words could be curative, could influence plant growth, could tame animals. At first it was sacred and misuse was unthinkable as men felt divine nature acting through them, but in the course of time misuse developed and the power over nature was used in the service of personal egotism.

We have a record of this in the *Bible*:

> And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually . . . The earth was also corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. (Genesis, Ch. 6)

There followed the Great Flood. Some people escaped and emigrated to different parts of the earth. In the language of Atlantis there were no parts of speech, or syntax. Chinese has retained elements of it – no parts of speech, no gender, no inflections, words of one syllable. In other parts of the earth changes took place in human mentality which resulted in changes in the language. They are connected with the development of thinking, with a

changing consciousness, with the experience of self versus the world, with means of cognition. Word and sentence become two things; there is subject and object; personal pronouns come into use; words are recognized as having a relationship with one another; time (tenses) becomes a factor. There are active and passive verbs. As the soul forces develop and become more distinctive so are they reflected in language. Nouns, verbs, adjectives are connected with the faculties of thinking, willing and feeling respectively.

In Atlantis perception and thought were one. In Post-Atlantis times language becomes the organ of thinking. It becomes the means of individual expression, of the individual human spirit. A new "sense" had to be developed, an addition to the usually recognized five senses, a "speech" sense – necessary to understand what is conveyed.

6. The Cosmic Word or the Music of the Spheres

We now have to enter deep waters, and the reader who has had difficulty with some of the ideas already presented may find even more difficulty in what follows. We must consider how the faculty for speech was incorporated in the human being and again it is Rudolf Steiner's spiritual science which gives the clue.

In Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice*, is the following beautiful passage:

> Sit, Jessica: look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
> There's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings
> Still quiring to the young eyed cherubins;
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

The reference is to the harmony of the spheres, an experience of which we cannot normally partake while in physical existence – "this muddy vesture

of decay" referring to our physical body. The matter is different for those whom we call initiates, those who have attained the right degree of spiritual perception. At some stage they become aware of a sort of music resounding through the cosmos – naturally not the same as we hear with our physical ears but a spiritual equivalent. It has also been called the "Cosmic Word".

In sleep, when the human soul/spirit sojourns in the spiritual world, this "music" can also be heard, but we bring back no conscious remembrance of it into waking life.

Looking back in history we find reference to this experience in various civilizations.

In the initiation of Egyptian times, the neophyte (he who was destined to become an initiate) was led to the boundary of existence, representing the end-limit of the physical world, and underwent a sort of new birth. This gave the neophyte the faculty of "hearing" the cosmic music. This "sound" is the resounding of everything and every being in the spiritual world – the world which is normally experienced in the life between death and rebirth. This composite of sounds, of tones, is the "Divine Word" that created both the human being and the world. The Egyptian neophyte experienced this sound as the exposition of his own being.

In the initiation of Greek times, for instance at the Mystery Centre of Ephesus, the neophyte was also guided to an experience of the cosmic word. He had to understand how the cosmic word works and weaves creatively through the whole universe.

He also had to experience what happens when a human being speaks. He uses air (breath) but there are also elements of fluid and of warmth. The earth developed through stages of warmth, air and fluidity, and as these are in the human breath so in speaking there is a microcosmic echo of what had been macrocosmic. What takes place in speaking is a cosmic process made human.

In the Nordic mythology are stories of Odin who drinks a magic potion and thus acquires the wisdom which lies in the power of speech. In an initiation, symbolised by his being suspended in the World Tree for nine days and nights, he learns how the divine word was instrumental in creating the world. He learns that the word has creative power and that he himself can use this power.

In Greek mythology we learn that Orpheus, with his lute, was able to mould unformed matter into forms corresponding to tones.

The "Music of the Spheres", the "Cosmic Word", is a creative power which resounds in the spiritual world and is the basis of creation. As a sort of parallel one could think of the forms created in sand on a Chladni plate when a tone is produced by stroking the edge of a sand-covered metallic plate with a violin bow. Variations of tone, of the type of sand or material used, or of the type of metal plate used, produce different patterns.

Through the power of the cosmic word all things came into existence, including the human being. He was "spoken" into being before he could speak. He is thus, from the beginning, endowed with the

power of the word and has the faculty of speech which developed later. Thus, the sounds of speech contain creative forces which connect man with his origin. In speech live the forces which once formed the cosmos, which worked through the cosmos on the microcosm, man, and made him the image of God.

The first words of the *Bible* state: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . ." We are told how he accomplished this – "And God said . . ." – i.e. God spoke. God spoke the name and it became an object.

In the second instalment of the creation story we read: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Let us note the reference to breath, air, which the human being uses in speaking.

It would be naïve to take such statements at face value. There is obviously a deeper background.

In the air are spiritual forces, beings. The medium through which spiritual beings worked to create the human form was the air. They created the larynx and all connected with it.

What is translated as "In the beginning . . ." refers not to the primeval beginnings of earth but to a particular cycle in earth's development. Other stages had preceded it. "God" refers to the Elohim, high-ranking spiritual beings. "Created" should properly be "mused" or "brooded", even "gestured". The Elohim were considering in their minds what had gone before and their musings, gestures, became creative. (We have noted the connection between

movement and sound.) Their "word" formed the world and man.

The cosmic word is spread over the whole universe. As far as the earth is concerned, one aspect of it is that its power flows into the earth from the different regions of the heavens. The power emanates from the voices, tones and activities of spiritual beings who are a reality, even if not immediately perceptible. The radiating power is formative.

Spiritual science tells us that on earth man views the planets and stars in their reflections; after death, or with the initiate's insight, he sees these as corresponding worlds of spiritual beings. This "seeing" is also a hearing but it is not sound as would be produced by the larynx. When we on earth sing and speak we use the air but the tone element is the earthly reflection of something supersensible.

The planetary spheres sing vowels into cosmic space and the fixed stars ensoul this song with consonantal elements. Different sounds are produced according to the changing relationships of planets and fixed stars. Vowels and consonants are cosmic forces.

When a human being descends to earth he receives these forces from the Zodiac and the planets. In his physical body he carries a reflection of cosmic consonants and in the etheric, or life-body, is a reflection of cosmic vowels.

The process is an echo of the original act of creation.

There are twelve basic consonants, each one associated with a particular sign of the Zodiac. The human organism is expressed sculpturally through the twelve primeval consonants. In pronouncing consonants there is always a vowel element and consonants need vowels. The use of vowels, which are associated with the planets, means the inclusion of soul.

The divine creative word has formed the human organism so that the microcosmic word can sound forth. Man can speak because the faculty was implanted in him – not only the organs of speech but also the speech centre in the brain. In the human being are to be found the same forces and forms of movement which are also found everywhere in the universe and in the world of nature but which are hidden from our normal senses because they belong to the etheric worlds in which the activity of the Word is revealed.

Speech organs are a microcosmic reflection of the creative powers which have worked on man and on the world from the macrocosm. The origin of the world, of man and of language are different manifestations of the same act of creation.

The sound of every letter expresses something about the being of man. A recitation of all the sounds of the Alphabet would be an expression of both the origin and constitution of the world as well as of man.

Another English poet, John Dryden, has expressed the same idea:

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

Epilogue

"In the beginning was the Word."

We recall the momentous opening words of St John's gospel: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

The reference is to "Word" and although somewhat beyond our immediate theme, it is worth a short note in view of all that has been described.

The "Word" as used here is a translation of the Greek *Logos* which itself is derived from a word meaning "to speak", and is also used in the sense of primeval knowledge.

The Word is the Cosmic Word, the creative activity of the Elohim. All activity was still in the spiritual sphere.

The Godhead created a form for the human being who, in the course of time, acquired the power to speak. The cosmic word was creative and human words are an echo. Through speech man expresses his origin.

"The Word was made flesh" means that the

essence of that same divine creative power which brought the world and man into existence descended to earth in the figure of Christ, awakening in humanity a new power for its future development.

Acknowledgements

The reader will have noticed several references in this book to Rudolf Steiner without whose spiritual scientific investigations it could not have been written in this form. There are very few of Dr Steiner's books or lectures which deal specifically with this theme, but references to speech and language are scattered throughout his works. It has been no mean task to find them all and I am much indebted to Dr J. Pohl, the Chief Librarian at the Goetheanum, Switzerland (the world centre of Dr Steiner's work) for his valuable assistance.

Finding the references has meant the perusal of some fifty books, some still not translated from the original German. There is little point in giving a complete list of them, but the following of Dr Steiner's works might be mentioned: the lecture course on "The Gospel of St John" (Hamburg); *Eurythmy as Visible Speech*; and *The Driving Force of Spiritual Powers in World History. Cosmic Memory* gives information about Atlantis and Lemuria. For those who can read German, see also *Geisteswissenschaftliche Sprachbetrachtungen*.

Books which may be of interest as introductions to spiritual science are Rudolf Steiner's *Theosophy of the Rosicrucians, The Spiritual Guidance of Mankind,* and *The Spiritual Ground of Education.* (Roy Wilkinson's books are also a source of information – Ed.)

Other books consulted are *The Study of Words* by Dean Trench (Parker, Son and Bourn, West Strand, 1861); *One Language* by Arnold Wadler (American Press for Art and Science, New York, 1948); *History in English Words* by Owen Barfield (Floris Books, Edinburgh, 1985). Dictionaries of one sort and other have also been consulted but particular mention must be made of Walter Skeat's *Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Oxford University Press).

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The Origin and Development of Langua

ROY WILKINSON

Foreword by Audrey E McAllen

All words undergo the same process. They express a reality but then become abstractions. Soul life is emancipated from words which then become mere gestures to indicate objects or ideas, and then they no longer designate or explain everything fully. In every single word it is possible to see a picture or perceive an imagination.

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Roy Wilkinson studied speech and drama at Dornach, Switzerland, before becoming a teacher. He taught [illegible] both in State and Steiner Schools. Since [illegible] he has become a well-known writer and [illegible]

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